



Public Notice

US Army Corps
of Engineers

Sacramento District
1325 J Street
Sacramento, CA 95814-2922

Public Notice Number: 200500197

Date: March 3, 2006

Comments Due: March 18, 2006

In reply, please refer to the Public Notice Number

SUBJECT: The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Sacramento District, (Corps) is evaluating a permit application to construct the Executive Airport South Ditch project, which would result in direct impacts to approximately 0.81 acres of waters of the United States, including wetlands, which are a remnant stream that has been channelized and is still tributary to the Sacramento River through pumps. This notice is to inform interested parties of the proposed activity and to solicit comments. This notice may also be viewed at the Corps web site at <http://www.spk.usace.army.mil/regulatory.html>.

AUTHORITY: This application is being evaluated under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act for the discharge of dredged or fill material in waters of the United States.

APPLICANT: Warren Peterson
Associate Engineer
City of Sacramento, Department of Utilities
1395 35th Avenue
Sacramento, California 95822
916-808-1910

LOCATION: The project site is located in Sacramento in Section 36, Township 8 North, Range 4 East, M.D.B.&M., in Sacramento County, California, and can be seen on the Sacramento East and Sacramento West, USGS 7.5 min Topographic Quadrangles.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The applicant proposes to place 1,700 linear feet (approximately 0.81 acres) of stream (aka Executive Airport Ditch) located in the Runway Safety Area (RSA) in a pre-cast concrete box culvert. Another 150 feet of the ditch, beyond the RSA adjacent to the proposed culvert, will be lined with concrete for maintenance purposes. Based on the available information, the overall project purpose is to remove a safety hazard from the Executive Airport RSA, in accordance with FAA Advisory Circulars 150/5300-13 and 150/5200-33A. The Advisory Circulars identify certain design standards for RSAs, amongst them 1) The RSA must be cleared and graded and have no ruts, humps, depressions, or other surface variations and 2) The RSA must be drained of all water. The applicant has modified its basic purpose as a result of comments to the original Public Notice (dated July 21, 2005) from the Sacramento County Airport System which focussed on the "critical need to address the aircraft safety hazard" caused by the Executive Airport Ditch.

The Ditch will be dewatered prior construction which is proposed to commence during the dry season when flows are low. After installation of the box culvert, the ditch will be backfilled with soil to match the grade of the adjacent Runway 2/20. The attached drawings provide additional project details.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Environmental Setting. There are approximately 1.03 acres of wetlands and other waters within the project area, including approximately 0.31 acre of emergent wetlands. The Executive Airport Ditch is nearly 3,500 ft. long stretching from Sump #22 near Golf View Drive to Freeport Boulevard. After crossing under Freeport Blvd. in a box culvert, the ditch flows into Willow Slough to Sump #28 which discharges into the Sacramento River. The ditch is about 25 to 35 feet wide at the top of the bank and 17 to 25 feet wide at its bottom. The site is characterized by steep banks of mostly bare soil and a bottom covered with aquatic vegetation. Species include narrow-leaved cattail (*Typha angustifolia*), perennial smartweed (*Polygonum punctatum*), tule (*Scirpus actus var. accidentalis*), duckweed (*Lemna* sp.), water plantain (*Alisma plantago-aquatica*), water primrose (*Ludwigia peploides*), and mosquito fern (*Azolla* sp.). Water hyacinth (*Eichhornia crassipes*) was observed in the stream near Freeport Blvd. The banks of the stream support patches of ruderal vegetation. Ruderal species observed include bristly ox-tongue (*Picris echioides*), prickly lettuce (*Lactuca serriola*), johnsongrass (*Sorghum halepense*), common evening primrose (*Oenothera biennis*), and dallis grass (*Paspalum dilatatum*).

Alternatives. The applicant has evaluated six alternatives, originally intended to reduce hazardous wildlife attractants at the airport (i.e., vegetation and standing water in the ditch): 1) intensified maintenance; 2) mechanical maintenance with summertime diversion; 3) permanent diversion; 4) concrete lining of the ditch; 5) culvert; and 6) installation of a lid over the ditch. According to the applicant, the only alternative that would achieve the project purpose of reducing safety hazards in the RSA is the proposed project which would convey the ditch flow through a culvert and grade the area to match the adjacent runway elevation. Additional information concerning project alternatives may be available from the applicant. Other alternatives may develop during the review process for this permit application. All reasonable project alternatives, in particular those which may be less damaging to the aquatic environment, will be considered.

Mitigation. The Corps requires that applicants consider and use all reasonable and practical measures to avoid and minimize impacts to aquatic resources. If the applicant is unable to avoid or minimize all impacts, the Corps may require compensatory mitigation. The applicant has proposed to partner with the County Department of Regional Parks, Recreation, and Open Space on a project that would result in restoration of 1.62 acres or more of riparian habitat (a 2:1 compensation ratio).

OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AUTHORIZATIONS: The applicant has indicated they have applied for Water Quality Certification, or a waiver, as required under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act from the State Regional Water Quality Control Board. The applicant has also indicated that they have applied for a Streambed Alteration Agreement with the California Department of Fish & Game.

HISTORIC PROPERTIES: Based on the available information (including the applicant's cultural resources report dated May 17, 2005), cultural resources are not located within the project's area of effect.

ENDANGERED SPECIES: The proposed project will not adversely affect any Federally-listed threatened or endangered species or their critical habitat that are protected by the Endangered Species Act. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the NOAA Fisheries concurred with this determination, pursuant to Section 7.

ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT: The proposed project will not adversely affect Essential Fish Habitat as defined by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.

The above determinations are based on information provided by the applicant and our preliminary review.

EVALUATION FACTORS: The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impacts, including cumulative impacts, of the described activity on the public interest. That decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefit, which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the described activity, must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors which may be relevant to the described activity will be considered, including the cumulative effects thereof; among those are conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, historic properties, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, floodplain values, land use, navigation, shoreline erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food and fiber production, mineral needs, consideration of property ownership and, in general, the needs and welfare of the people. The activity's impact on the public interest will include application of the Section 404(b)(1) guidelines promulgated by the Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency (40 CFR Part 230).

The Corps is soliciting comments from the public, Federal, State, and local agencies and officials, Indian tribes, and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed activity. Any comments received will be considered by the Corps to determine whether to issue, modify, condition, or deny a permit for this proposal. To make this decision, comments are used to assess impacts on endangered species, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects, and other public interest factors listed above. Comments are used in the preparation of an Environmental Assessment and/or an Environmental Impact Statement pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act. Comments are also used to determine the need for a public hearing and to determine the overall public interest of the proposed activity.

SUBMITTING COMMENTS: Written comments, referencing Public Notice 200500197, must be submitted to the office listed below on or before August 20, 2005:

Kathleen Dadey, Project Manager
US Army Corps of Engineers, Sacramento District
Sacramento Office
1325 J Street, Room 1480
Sacramento, California 95814-2922
Email: Kathleen.A.Dadey@usace.army.mil

The Corps is particularly interested in receiving comments related to the proposal's probable impacts on the affected aquatic environment and the secondary and cumulative effects. Anyone may request, in writing, that a public hearing be held to consider this application. Requests shall specifically state, with particularity, the reason(s) for holding a public hearing. If the Corps determines that the information received in response to this notice is inadequate for thorough evaluation, a public hearing may be warranted. If a public hearing is warranted, interested parties will be notified of the time, date, and location. Please note that all comment letters received are subject to release to the public through the Freedom of Information Act. If you have questions or need additional information please contact the applicant or the Corps' project manager Kathleen Dadey, telephone 916-557-7253, Kathleen.A.Dadey@usace.army.mil.

Attachments: 6 drawings